

but they have been still more frequently and successfully introduced, under the advantage of retaining the terms while the principles were gradually subverted. And therefore I shall be pardoned for repeating this once more, that since the peculiar words can be kept in one invariable signification only by keeping that signification clearly in sight in another way than the bare use of these words themselves, it would be wise in Christian authors and speakers sometimes to express the ideas in common words, either in expletive and explanatory connexion with the peculiar terms, or occasionally, instead of them. I would still be understood to approve entirely of the use of a few of this class of terms; while the above observations may deduct very much from the usual estimate of their value and importance.

These pages have attempted to show, in what particulars the language adopted by a great proportion of Christian divines might be modified, and yet remain faithful to the principles of Christian doctrine. Such common words as have acquired an affected cast in theological use, might give place to the other common words which express the ideas in a plain and unaffected manner, and the phrases foimed of common words uncouthly combined may be swept away. — Many peculiar and antique words might be exchanged for other single words, of equivalent signification, and in general use. — And the small number of peculiar terms acknowledged and established as of permanent use and necessity, might, even separately from the consideration of modifying the diction, be often, with advantage to the explicit declaration and clear comprehension of Christian truth, made to give place to a fuller expression, in a number of common words, of those ideas of which these peculiar terms are the single signs.

Now such an alteration would bring the language of divines nearly to the classical standard. If evangelical sentiments could be faithfully presented, in an order of words of which so small a part should be of specific cast, they could be presented in what should be substantially the diction of Addison or Pope. And if even Shaftesbury, Boling-broke, and Hume, could have become Christians by some mighty and sudden efficacy of conviction, and had determined to write thenceforth in the spirit of the Apostles,